

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

AID-05 CEA-01 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 CIEP-01 STR-04

TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 SAM-01 OMB-01 IO-10 XMB-02

AGR-05 /103 W

----- 109776

R 291748Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1507

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL BELFAST

AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

AMCONSUL LIVERPOOL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 08134

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, EGEN, UK, EEC

SUBJECT: EC REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN: REFLECTIONS ON A STI-

FLED YAWN

REF: LONDON 7828

SUMMARY: THE REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN DRAGGED THROUGH ITS  
PENULTIMATE WEEK GENERATING INCREASING HEAT, BUT VERY  
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LITTLE LIGHT. THERE WERE, MOREOVER, FEW SIGNS OF SIGNIFI-

CANT PUBLIC INTEREST IN THE CAMPAIGN ITSELF OR OF DOUBT ABOUT THE OUTCOME; INDEED, THE PUBLIC RESPONSE THUS FAR MIGHT BEST BE CHARACTERIZED BY A STIFLED YAWN. THE AVERAGE VOTER HAS NO DOUBT BEEN CONFUSED BY THE CONFLICTING CLAIMS AND COUNTERCLAIMS OF THE OPPOSING FACTIONS. AS NEITHER SIDE HAS MADE A PERSUASIVE CASE, THE ADVANTAGE LIES WITH THE PRO-MARKEETERS WHO EFFECTIVELY REPRESENT THE BRITISH ESTABLISHMENT. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, A "NO" VOTE WOULD REPRESENT THE REPUDIATION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT, AND WE DON'T SEE THAT HAPPENING EVEN THOUGH THE ANTI-MARKEETERS HAVE NOT ENTIRELY GIVEN UP HOPE OF A POLITICAL MIRACLE SAVING THE CAUSE. THE FOLLOWING CABLE IS A COMPILATION OF RECENT IMPRESSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS, PERHAPS ILLUSTRATING THE BANKRUPTCY OF THE CAMPAIGN ITSELF DURING THE PAST WEEK. END SUMMARY.

1. OUTLOOK - WITH ONE WEEK REMAINING BEFORE REFERENDUM, THE MAJOR CAMPAIGN ISSUES -- THE IMPACT CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP WOULD HAVE ON FOOD PRICES, EMPLOYMENT, SOVEREIGNTY, INVESTMENT, TRADE FLOWS, ET AL. -- HAVE BEEN ARGUED, BUT NOT CLARIFIED. POSITIONS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE EC MEMBERSHIP ARGUMENT WERE STAKED OUT EARLY, BUT-TRESSED WITH STATISTICAL DATA, MUCH OF WHICH IS CURIOUSLY INTERPRETED IF NOT LARGEY BOGUS, AND HAVE NOT BEEN YIELDED. THE EFFECT THIS UNINSPIRING AND INCREASINGLY BITTER DEBATE IS HAVING ON VOTERS IS DIFFICULT TO ASSESS, BUT MANY OBSERVERS BELIEVE IT ONLY SERVES TO CONFUSE. ACCEPTANCE OF THIS PROPOSITION, WHICH SEEMS REASONABLE TO US, IMPLIES THE OUTCOME WILL HINGE ON CREDIBILITY RATHER THAN FACT. IT IS PRECISELY IN THIS REGARD THAT THE ANTI-MARKEETERS WOULD APPEAR TO BE WEAKEST. ROUGHLY SPEAKING, THEY ARE RADICALS OF BOTH THE RIGHT AND LEFT, AND THEY ARE ALIGNED AGAINST THE BRITISH ESTABLISHMENT -- THE GOVERNMENT, THE LEADERS OF MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES, THE LARGE FINANCIAL/INDUSTRIAL INTERESTS, THE MEDIA AND A RESPECTABLE PORTION OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT. HENCE A "NO" VOTE ON JUNE 5 WOULD HAVE TO BE INTERPRETED AS A RESOUNDING REPUDIATION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT, AND THAT SIMPLY DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE IN THE CARDS.

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2. THE MEDIA - IF THE MEDIA IN FACT ARE ABLE TO INFLUENCE THE BRITISH ELECTORATE, THE PRO-MARKEETERS APPEAR TO HAVE LITTLE CAUSE FOR CONCERN ABOUT THE RESULT. THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA HAVE GENERALLY MAINTAINED AN EVEN-HANDED, BALANCED APPROACH TO THE EC QUESTION, THE RADIO ESPECIALLY STANDING VERY HIGH WITH THE ANTI-MARKET GROUP. EVEN ON TV AND RADIO, HOWEVER, IT IS POSSIBLE TO DETECT A BIAS IN FAVOR OF CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP WITHOUT

BEING PARANOID. THE PRESS IS A DIFFERENT KETTLE OF FISH. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE COMMUNIST MORNING STAR, THE LONDON DAILY PRESS UNANIMOUSLY FAVORS THE PRO-EC CAUSE, AND IT IS NOT BASHFUL ABOUT SHOWING ITS PREFERENCE. THE GUARDIAN, ACCORDING TO ANTI-MARKET SOURCES WHO WATCH SUCH THINGS CLOSELY, IS BY FAR THE FAIREST NEWSPAPER, BUT EVEN THEREIN THE PRO-EC CAUSE RECEIVES MORE SPACE (AS WELL AS EDITORIAL SUPPORT). THE DAILY MAIL EARNS THE ANTI-MARKETEERS' AWARD AS THE WORST OF THE LOT. THE SITUATION IN THE PROVINCES IS NOT MUCH DIFFERENT, THE LARGER PAPERS BEING CHAIN-OWNED, BUT THE ANTI-MARKETEERS FIND SOME COMFORT FROM SOME INDEPENDENTLY-OWNED PAPERS (E.G. ABERDEEN'S PRESS AND JOURNAL). MORE INTERESTING THAN EDITORIAL POSTURE OR SPACE ALLOCATION, HOWEVER, IS THE

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ACTUAL MANIPULATION OF NEWS, INCLUDING THE APPARENT SUPPRESSION OF ANTI-EC ARGUMENTS. PERHAPS THE MOST STRIKING CASE WAS THE HANDLING OF FRENCH PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING'S ALLEGED REPUDIATION OF THE RENEGOTIATED TERMS OF ENTRY (LONDON 7876). AFTER THE FIRST DAY, THE STORY SIMPLY DROPPED OUT OF SIGHT, DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE FIVE MINISTERS WHO SIGNED THE ORIGINAL ALLEGATION REITER-  
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ATED THEIR CHARGES IN LATER SPEECHES. IT IS ALSO NOTE-WORTHY THAT, AS FAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE, NEITHER THE GOVERNMENT NOR THE PRO-EC CAMP SOUGHT TO REFUTE THEIR ALLEGATION, EVEN THOUGH IT WAS BASED ON A VERY DUBIOUS INTERPRETATION OF GISCARD'S REMARKS. WE ALSO UNDERSTAND FROM PRO-EC SOURCES THAT THE MEDIA PLAN A CAREFULLY ORCHESTRATED BUILD-UP TO REFERENDUM DAY DURING THE FINAL CAMPAIGN WEEK, APPARENTLY SEEKING TO CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE OF EXCITEMENT, WHICH HERETOFORE HAS BEEN NOTABLY ABSENT, AND PERSUADE THE UNDECIDED TO SUPPORT CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP.

3. YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A WEATHERMAN - THE EDITORIAL BOARD OF THE SOCIALIST NEW STATESMAN, PREVIOUSLY OPPOSED TO BRITISH MEMBERSHIP, REPORTEDLY VOTED MAY 28 TO COME DOWN IN THE PRO-EC CAMP.

4. TONY BENN AND BENNOPHOBIA - AN OBSERVER RECENTLY ARRIVED FROM ANOTHER PLANET MIGHT WELL THINK THE REFERENDUM HAD TO DO WITH INDUSTRY SECRETARY TONY BENN RATHER THAN THE EC. HIS OFTEN OUTRAGEOUS AND UNSUPPORTED CHARGES OF THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF MEMBERSHIP (E.G. CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP WILL COST BRITAIN 500,000 JOBS) HAVE EARNED HIM HEADLINES NEARLY EVERY DAY, AND THE WRATH AND SCORN OF THE PRO-MARKETEERS AS WELL. HE HAS BECOME A LIGHTENING ROD FOR INVECTIVE AND, SINCE HE SEEMS TO ENJOY THIS ROLE, IT IS DIFFICULT TO ESCAPE THE CONCLUSION HE DELIBERATELY INCITES THE PRO-EC CAMP AND HIS PRIME MINISTER. THIS COMEDY PROVIDES ALMOST ENDLESS GRIST FOR THE SPECULATIVE MILLS OF POLITICAL JOURNALISTS, BUT THERE IS A CONSENSUS AMONG OUR LABOR PARTY SOURCES THAT WILSON WILL NOT SACK BENN, BUT WILL OFFER HIM ANOTHER JOB.

5. VIEW FROM THE END OF A SHOESTRING - RE-  
CENT VISITS TO THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE ANTI-EC "NATIONAL  
REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN" AND THE "GET BRITAIN OUT" GROUP  
(A-418) REVEALED GROWING CONCERN OVER THE REFERENDUM OUT-  
COME, CREEPING PARANOIA AND A CONTINUED BELIEF IN POLITI-  
CAL MIRACLES. THE LEVEL OF ACTIVITY HAS FALLEN OFF  
MARKEDLY FROM THE FRENETIC EARLY DAYS OF THE CAMPAIGN, AS  
MOST RALLIES HAVE BEEN PLANNED, HALLS RENTED, SPEAKERS  
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SCHEDEDULED AND LITERATURE DISTRIBUTED. THIS GIVES THE  
VOLUNTEER WORKERS MORE TIME TO TALK AND FEED THEIR SUS-  
PICIONS ABOUT THE EARLIER-PROPHESIED ESTABLISHMENT CON-  
SPIRACY TO KEEP BRITAIN IN THE EC. THE LATEST PIECE OF  
EVIDENCE: SOME OF THE ANTI-MARKET STATEMENTS THE GOVERN-  
MENT IS MAILING TO ALL HOMES WERE REPORTEDLY SENT OUT IN  
"VOTE YES" COVERS. YET THE BITTERNESS AND FRAYING TEM-  
PERS WHICH ARE EVIDENT IN THE PUBLIC DEBATE ARE NOT YET  
ECHOED AT THE WORKING LEVEL.

6. THE WEEK AHEAD - IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT  
EVEN THE ANTICIPATED MEDIA CRESCENDO WILL SHAKE THE  
BRITISH PUBLIC OUT OF ITS APPARENTLY APATHETIC MOOD.  
WORKING LEVEL ANTI-MARKETEERS, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE TALKING  
OF A VOTER TURN OUT OF 40 PERCENT OR LESS. EQUALY,  
THERE IS LITTLE REASON TO EXPECT THE WEEK AHEAD WILL BE  
DECISIVE OR EVEN VERY NEWSWORTHY, THOUGH PRIME MINISTER  
WILSON WILL BE STUMPING ACTIVELY AND HE HAS DECIDED TO  
PERMIT PRO- AND ANTI-MINISTERS TO APPEAR ON PUBLIC PLAT-  
FORMS OPPOSING ONE ANOTHER. IT IS A STRANGE AND ALMOST  
UNREAL ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH TO RESOLVE A QUESTION OF SUCH  
IMPORTANCE TO THE FUTURE OF THE UK.

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## Message Attributes

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